

The Gospel Condemns Before It Releases

by Shane Idleman

The gospel condemns before it releases, breaking us before it restores us, and it's the good news that we need to hear.

Duration: 29:01

Scripture: Acts 3:19, Romans 10:9, Philippians 2:10, James 4:10

Topics: "Repentance", "Revival"

Description

This sermon emphasizes the importance of brokenness and humility before God, highlighting that these states lead to victory, not defeat. It calls for a return to God, repentance, and revival, stressing the need for genuine relationship with Jesus over mere religion. The message challenges unbelievers, prodigals, and Pharisees to repent, seek the Holy Spirit's power, and come back to God.

Transcript

Many of us, I've talked to a lot of people, we are at a broken, humble state this weekend. And two things can happen. What I don't want it to do to you is you can get very discouraged.

I'm broken, I'm humble, I can never measure up. Oh man, I'm worthless. That's actually not the goal.

The goal of brokenness and humility is to get you in a position of victory, not defeat. See, when we are humble and broken before God, now we can receive from God. Now we can understand what his will is.

Now he can say, now I can use you. I've been wanting to use you the last few years, but now I can use you. So don't let it result in defeat and discouragement.

Now you're coming from a position of victory. Okay God, you broke me, you've humbled me, now how can you use me? So it's actually a very encouraging thing to be humble and broken before the Lord. And Jason alluded to this earlier, that the stage up here, what this is all about with Ahab and kings and reading about Ahab was a wicked king.

And Elisha came on the scene calling the whole nation back to God. And he actually had the people on Mount Carmel. He was looking down and he said, how long will you falter? Another translation says, how long will you waver between two opinions if God is God, follow him? And he said, let the God who answers by fire, let him be God.

And God consumed the entire altar. And Ahab was so upset. He said, Elisha, oh, you troubler of Israel.

See, anytime you stand for God, they're gonna think you're the troubler. I can see it now. Oh, Shane, you troubler of America.

Why are you waking us up from our death asleep? The king was upset at Elisha and he ran for his life, but God spoke to him in that still small voice of the Holy Spirit. And I was reminded, I wanted to write it down this morning, I forgot, Martin Luther King Jr. said something very interesting. He said, the church, us, the church must be reminded that it is not the master or the servant of the state.

It is the conscience of the state. And if we lose our prophetic zeal, we will become an irrelevant social club without moral or spiritual authority. See, that's what happens to the church.

We are called to be the conscience of the nation. That's one of the roles of the pulpit is to be the conscience of the nation and say, not on my watch, not on my watch. It's interesting, many people celebrate Halloween on the 31st.

You know what I celebrate? 1517, the church doors in Wittenberg, Germany, Martin Luther nailed the 95 theses to these doors calling the church back. And I don't know, it's not 1517. I'm not Martin Luther and we're sure not in Germany, but we need to nail those 95 theses back to the church doors and say, as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

If the world's going to hell in a handbasket, I will serve the Lord. Back to prayer, back to fasting, back to brokenness and humility. If my people calling the church back.

See, the pulpit used to be powerful, not wimpy. We used to proclaim the truth. Now, there's wonderful churches out there doing great things but the loss, the vast majority reminds me of Samson.

He said, I will go out and attack the Philistines just like other times before. And the Bible says he knew not that the spirit of the Lord had departed from him. King James says he wist not.

He knew not that the spirit of the Lord had departed from him. And guys, the main theme of this whole couple days, at least on my heart, has been leadership matters. Leadership matters in our nation.

Leadership matters in our homes and leadership matters in the church. Don't you see the enemy going after the leadership? Because as the leadership goes, so goes the nation. As the leadership goes, so goes the home.

As the leadership goes, so goes the church. And the last point is interesting. If my people humble themselves, pray, seek my face, and the thing we don't wanna talk about very often is if you're not popular, this is not gonna win me a popularity contest.

If my people turn from their wicked ways. And it's interesting, if you do some research in the Old Testament primarily on what a false prophet is, a false prophet often was somebody who said, peace, peace, when there's no peace. Look at Jeremiah 23.

God says, I did not send these prophets, but they ran. I did not speak to them, but they spoke. But had they truly stood in my counsel, had they truly stood in the counsel of God, they would have turned the entire nation back to me.

God says, is not my word like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces? Is not my word like a fire that devours? But you have perverted the words of the living God by not warning and instructing and encouraging and calling the people back. Always a false prophet will tell people what they want to hear and not what they need to hear. They're going, peace, peace, Jerusalem, peace, peace.

I know you're sacrificing your children on the hot arms of Baal, and you can hear the screams of your child, you're sacrificing them, but don't worry, peace, peace. Don't worry, God doesn't care about your idolatry and you're walking away from him, there's peace. Tell us smooth things.

Tell us things we want to hear. And that's where it gets to this point. If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves, pray, and turn from their wicked ways.

This is an interesting concept. We can humble ourselves, theoretically. We can act like we're praying.

We can say we're seeking God's face, but all this will fall on deaf ears unless we turn from our wicked ways. And I did have my testimony interweaved in here, but I've spoken so much about that over the last few messages. I didn't want to spend too much time on that.

And I don't know, did you guys have the picture up there in the sound I sent to Jason? I might've forgot. Oh, there we go. 21 years old, 22, steroids, partying, killing myself, Venice Beach, all that good stuff.

I look at that now and I just almost cry because that was on the broad road to destruction. Thank you guys. I won't leave up there too much.

So when I hear about the prodigal son, when I hear that God reached down and saved me, see, when I listen to Amazing Grace, I gotta hit rewind a few times. It's grace that's brought me here thus far. I was lost, but now I'm found.

How great, how wonderful that sound. Amazing Grace, it saved a wretch like me. It's okay to say that.

See, here's what happens. When you tell people the truth that we are sinners in need of a Savior, then they can better assimilate the information. But when we make God out to be a cosmic ball of love and a doting grandfather that's just winking, he doesn't care, he'd just do that.

He's a ball of love. We give people the wrong perception of who God is. And it's often, often, here's where my concern is, when the father wanders, so will the children.

When a father wanders, so will the children. It was the same today as it was in 1757 when they wrote the song Prone to Wander. Lord, I feel it, prone to leave the God I love.

Here's my heart, oh, take and seal it, seal it for thy courts above. And I have this picture. I read the story.

I couldn't find it to reference in different things. But it was a man who, this little boy was raised in church. He was raised to be a godly man.

He was destined to do great things. God had a call on his life. But by the time he was 20, he ended up drunk and in prison, had a crime against him.

And he thought, oh, God, what's gonna happen? What's my father gonna say? His dad walked into prison. All he said was, son, you don't belong here. And that encouraged him.

That's the word for you guys today. God is saying, I believe, to many men, son, you don't belong here. It's time to come home.

It's time to come home. It wasn't until the prodigal came to himself. Actually ended up eating, spending everything, eating what the pigs eat, and he finally came to himself.

And I'll admit to you, I'm a broken man from a broken childhood that resulted in a broken marriage that led to a broken life, but God. Here's the thing. We will beat ourself up as long as we live.

The enemy will come in and badger, and that's the only reason I bring up my background with barely graduating high school, reading and learning disability. I had a 1.8 in high school. Pretty good, right? No, no, no.

And so the books are just, I just laugh sometimes. Writing books, I couldn't even spell. I could barely write.

And God, but God. See, that's the point. You get to a state of brokenness, and then you say, but God.

But God can rebuild. See, he's just looking. The eyes of the Lord go to and fro throughout the whole earth to find those who are loyal to him, whose hearts are broken before him, a broken and contrite heart.

God says, I will not cast away. You'd be amazed at what God can do with humility and brokenness and prayer and seeking and repentance. And I really didn't have a long message tonight, obviously, because I've said so much as it is.

And I was going back and forth on when I should throw this in there, but I think it's important. It's interesting that Sean McDowell's actually speaking, I believe, Saturday and Sunday. And I read an article by his dad, Josh McDowell.

It was a new man magazine many, many years ago. And this, you know when you read something, it just sticks with you? And you just, it just, it really brought me to tears that day. And it is, it's something that I just can't quite get over because it's true.

And he said, you know who Josh McDowell is probably? He's written books. He spoke to young adults all the time. That's what he did in his ministry, 90s and 2000, early 2000.

But he said the question that he gets from young adults more than any other question is this, how can we live for Christ when we don't want the Christ that our parents have? Let's just change that. How can we live for Christ when I don't want the Christ that my father has? See, that needs to hurt. That needs to hurt.

That should cause every man in this room to go home, fall on his face before God and repent and to restore and rebuild. Well, that's not me, Shane. Well, good, praise God.

Praise God. But the vast majority of people, our kids, do not want the Christ they see in us because we're not resembling everything I just talked about, that humility and that brokenness in that time of seeking God. And one thing I learned from that picture from my life is that many people have religion but not a relationship.

Do you know you can know all about Jesus but not know him? You don't have a relationship with him? For example, a person I followed many years, Billy Graham, a common name here. If you were to be here and I would say, Dr. Graham, I watched many of your sermons. I've read your biographies.

I knew when you were here, when you gave your heart to the Lord, you walked down that Saudez Trail. I think it was 1934. I know all about you.

Do you know what he'd say to me? Young man, I don't know you. I don't know you. And that's what's happening in the church is many people have religion and not a relationship because religion is comfortable.

If I can make religion out to God to be whatever I want, whoever I want, that's comfortable. But that's not relationship. And I'm gonna go through a very common thing here that people call the Roman's Road and it's wonderful for those because I don't wanna neglect, there are people here, a group this size of course, there are people here you are searching, you are asking questions.

I might have irritated you a little bit. That's a good thing. The Holy Spirit is convicting and you're like this God thing.

I don't know. And here is the answer. Romans 3.23, for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.

All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Romans 6.23, the wages of sin is death. Now that's not very popular, but it is very powerful.

Telling people the way, can you imagine? Wages of sin is death, but that's the gospel. That's the good news. And something you have to always remember is the gospel condemns you before it releases.

The gospel sentence you before it pardons and the gospel breaks you before it restores you. That's what we miss about the gospel. Yes, it's offensive.

It's absolutely offensive to the sinful, prideful, arrogant heart. It's supposed to be. It condemns me and then it releases me.

What am I getting? If I don't see my need for a savior, why would I even, that's why I don't like the backdoor approach. Well, people come to know Jesus someday and we don't have to tell them all this. That's the backdoor approach, doesn't work.

Osmosis doesn't work in church. We've got to shoot people the truth. We've got to tell, Jesus did, Jesus did.

He would tell everybody their need for him, their need for a savior. For the wages of sin is death. It is the power of God for salvation for everyone who believes.

Romans 6.23, doesn't end there, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. See, he gives the bad news, but then the good news. And he says, many will come to me in that day and say, Lord, Lord, we did all these things in your name.

And he'll say, depart from you or depart from me. I don't even know you. See, how can Jesus say I don't even know you? Because the relationship is not there.

The relationship is not there. Romans 6.23 does not end. The gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

And Romans 5.8 declares, but God demonstrated his own love toward us and that while we were sinners, while we are still sinners, Christ died for us. This amazes me, that picture you saw, he died for me when I was living in my sin, when I was cursing, when I was parting. This whole life said he died for me then.

He died, and I'm teaching on Sunday, we're in the book of Acts about Peter coming and calling the people to repentance. You know the story if you've been in church a while, right? They think these guys are drunk. The spirit of God falls in this place.

Boom, you see revival, the church is beginning. They are drunk, oh, they're out of their mind. Peter said, no, no, hold on, hold on, man.

This is that which the prophet Joel spoke of, that in the last days I will pour out my spirit on all flesh, your sons and your daughters will prophesy, your men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions, and on my men servants and my maid servants I will pour out my spirit on those days. Praise God, that's what we need. I'm not afraid of the presence of God, that's what we need here.

When true, genuine revival breaks out, you will be on your face before God. It's not weirdness, it's not oddity, it's God breaking his people, that's revival. See, it's interesting on this topic, the very thing we are afraid of is the very thing we need, a mighty filling of the Holy Spirit.

And I alluded to this earlier and people like to debate it and the power of the Holy Spirit is real. The Holy Spirit is part of the triune nature of God. God exists in one.

We worship one God, careful there, but he reveals himself, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the Spirit is the Spirit of God, the Spirit of conviction. The Spirit is actually enabling me to preach. The Spirit is convicting, he's drawing, the Word of God comes alive, and you know exactly what I'm talking about.

And we desperately need a revival, but we're so worried about being weird and odd. No, no, that's not revival, that's being weird and odd. If it's odd, it's God, it's not biblical necessarily.

But when God brings true revival, repentance is sought, deliverance is the Holy Spirit is breaking his people. Do you know what the sermon title that would not be popular today, but cause revival hundreds of years ago? Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. Oh, you couldn't get away with that.

I don't know if I'd wanna challenge that one. That might not be on YouTube. Nobody would wanna watch that on YouTube, right? It's gotta have all the good.

Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God. Now I might have, what was his name? Jonathan Edwards, his point was he was just reading a manuscript. The Spirit of God fell upon that place.

George Whitfield would preach repentance. They'd preach repentance and men would fall on their face before God. That's genuine revival.

So Peter said, repent and be converted because he said, you put Christ on the cross. So he's preaching, this is that which Joel spoke of. And you by ignorance put Christ on the cross.

And they said, what must we do to be saved? He said, repent. Every one of you, repent. In the times of refreshing.

If you look up that word refreshing, it's revival. Times of revival will come from the presence of the Lord. And as I'm reading that, I can think, who's in his audience? Can you imagine who's in his audience? The Roman soldier? The Roman soldier that said, but Peter, I took the five pound sledgehammer and I nailed him to the cross, not me.

Peter says, repent, repent. But I'm the guy who took the crown of thorns I pushed it on his head. I could tell it was going into his skull and blood was coming down.

Peter, not me, yes, you. So it doesn't matter what's in your past. It matters what Christ died for.

That's the message of the gospel. That's the good news. And so many people, I'll come to God when I get ready.

That's not how it works. You'll never be ready. That's the point of the cross.

Theologians call it propitiation. It just means Jesus absorbed the wrath of God on the cross. And then you can imagine this time in history, all of sin, all of sin from Genesis to Revelation was paid at Calvary.

That's why Jesus being close to the father had said, Eli, Eli, lama zabatchini, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? It's that time when God the father departed from the son because he absorbed the wrath of God and paid the penalty. Oh my God. We'll get more excited at the Broncos.

Are they even playing? I don't even know who's playing anymore. The Dodgers, we see, we get so excited as men over these things that are trivial. But when God gets your heart and repentance takes place in times of refreshing, come from the presence of the Lord.

How can you sing amazing grace and not weep? I was blind, but now I see. I was lost, but now I'm found. He saved a wretch like me.

He reached down into a little country town and I should be dead by now. He said, I'm gonna save that boy. I'm gonna save him and preach the glorious gospel of Jesus Christ using the foolish things to confound the wise.

There are churches in my area that tell people don't go to my church because I didn't go to seminary. That's not a real church. Confounding the wise.

And on this, I don't know why I get on this rabbit trail, but it's so interesting that when God changes your heart, you love theology. You love the word of God. You love worship.

God is changing your heart. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. Be crystal clear on this issue.

Jesus is the only way, the only truth, the only life. No man comes to the Father except through Christ. Won't all roads lead to God? They'll lead to the judgment seat of God, but they won't lead to heaven.

All roads don't lead to heaven. What was the point of the cross? I had somebody wanna argue with me the other day about purgatory. Well, we have to go there because it wasn't quite paid.

What? That was the whole point of the cross. So we rejoice in the cross. It's because of the cross I proclaim the need for salvation, but also obedience to God's word.

Every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. There is no power in any other name. Why are so many people upset? The school districts, get his name out of there.

I went and prayed to Mike Katonovich's office. Don't mention Jesus Christ. Really? Did you check out who you're asking to pray first? Have you watched any sermons? Because that's impossible.

Remove him from the courts. Remove him from the courts. Do you know the entire legal system was founded on the word of God? Blackstones commentaries on the laws of England gave Bible references to every single law.

The Supreme court acknowledged our reliance on God. You couldn't even run for office unless you profess a belief in God, the son and the Holy spirit. Oh my God, how far have we drifted? I think that's enough.

I'll just have Tim come up. I guess take some energy for Sunday. But all joking aside, guys, you don't have to keep saying, I got the point across.

You either know him or you don't. If you don't know him, every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Christ is Lord. End of story.

You don't get to heaven and debate. I tell people, tell me, well, get there and I'll tell God about all my good works. No, no, no, you'll be on your face before God like a little weeping, crying child saying eternity separated from God.

Why? Because I didn't bow my knee to him on this side of Calvary. I waited and I waited. Every knee will bow.

Do you understand that? See, the devil and God are not equal. The devil and God are not equal. Jesus has dominion.

Jesus is the only name that's saved. That's why people get upset. That's why they wanna remove his name from everything.

Don't pray in his name. School districts, everything. Get the name of Jesus out.

Why? Because that name is so powerful that even demons tremble. When you say the name of Jesus, I love watching his ministry. He would walk out and the man, demon-possessed, half of us would go, a demon-possessed? I don't know what to do.

Jesus is out of him. Out of him. We are legion.

I don't care who you are. You're out of him. Everybody was healed, delivered, set free in the name of Christ.

Oh, how great that name. At the sound of your name, at the sound of your name, the lost are saved and find their way. The condemned feel no shame.

Every fear has no place. The enemy has to flee at the sound of your name. People say, oh, you're so passionate.

Why wouldn't I be? Why wouldn't you? Well, when God saves you and redeems, he's not just saving, it's redeeming. Now he's gonna teach me how to be a father to my little girls. Now he's gonna teach me how to be a... See, I got beat a little bit when I was growing up.

They call it child abuse today. And I don't wanna go there. God, I need you to change me and break me and restore me.

God, I need you on this side of the cross as much as I needed you on that side. I'm one decision away from ruining my life. Shane, are you sure? Yeah, because so are you.

So I'm just gonna have Tim come back up. We're gonna do worship. He's gonna close with a song or two.

And I'm gonna throw three things out there. If you don't know God, if you don't know Christ, the Bible is very simple. If you confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord and you believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

Interesting thing. Your past is actually forgiven. Your past is forgiven.

Your present is secure. In Christ, we are new creations before God. And the enemy comes in and taunts all the time.

But if you don't know him, I'm gonna give you the opportunity to make that decision. Because we've gotta start being bold in our faith. We've gotta say, I don't care who sees.

I don't care. I'll be the first one up to the altar. Actually, there's more room in the back probably.

But I'll be the first one up here to say, God, create a clean heart. Renew a right spirit in me. I've got all this junk that needs to come out.

I need to be filled again mightily with the Holy Spirit. I need to proclaim your truth because I'm a leaky vessel. D.O. Moody said, we are leaky vessels.

We gotta sit underneath the fountain of life every single day. And that's the second call is to the prodigal. It's time to come home.

It's time to come home. This isn't a game. Life is not a game.

It's a game. As we sleep and slumber, the enemy is coming in. He's stealing your children.

He's going after our kids. He's going after our families. And I've had enough.

He should've killed me 20 years ago because I've had enough. We are pulling down strongholds by praying and fasting and seeking the heart of God again. If I can, I don't need this whole room.

If I can get 10 men on their face before God, crying out to God, we can change the culture, change our homes. God says, just give me one or two. See, you plus God is the majority.

Have you ever thought about that? You plus God is the majority. So the prodigal son, it's time to come home. Life is not a game.

And I feel this strongly as well, too. It's time for the Pharisee to repent. The person who has sound doctrine, but they don't have the power of the Holy Spirit.

You are hurting your family. You are arrogant. You are mean.

You are condescending. You have truth, but truth doesn't have you. You know how I know? Because I went through this season.

I could put down everybody. You learn a little Greek. You learn a little Hebrew, right? You're well-read.

I quote all the books of Bible. I quote tons of scriptures, and I would put down everybody. And my mom finally said, Shane, nobody wants to be around you.

I'm representing the gospel, and nobody wants to be around me? Because that's what can happen. Knowledge puffs up. The more, if you don't stay humble, oh goodness, you're gonna want to debate everything.

And God, what was Jesus' words to the Pharisees? Oh, Lord, if we had time. So the prodigal, the unbeliever, the Pharisee, we need to repent tonight. We need to be filled mightily with the Spirit of God.

I don't know what that looks like, and I don't care what that looks like. But I'm just gonna ask. I'll ask those who want to come forward, go ahead and come forward.

Tim's gonna start with worship. Just come up here. And if you need Jesus Christ, if you need that, I'll just come down here.

I like preaching down here anyway. I'll pray with you. I'll unhook this microphone.

I'll pray with you. If you need the Lord, if you need repentance, you need restoration. And I know most of the men should be up here leading by example in their homes.

Thank you, Lord. As we close tonight, I pray that you would convict us and draw us closer to you. We would surrender our lives to you and not be ashamed of the gospel.

In Jesus' name, amen.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/32/SID32065.mp3>

Video: <https://sermonindex2.b-cdn.net/jzKEKSd-EvE.mp4>

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/shane-idleman/the-gospel-condemns-before-it-releases/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net